"The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*." – Leon Trotsky

Supplement

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Workers, Liberation Fighters:

Defend Julius Malema!

The statement below was originally published on 8 October 2025.

The East London Magistrate Court's 1 October ruling against EFF leader Julius Malema is an outrageous attack which must be fought by all of us! While Malema and the EFF are the immediate targets, make no mistake: This is a deadly threat to ***everyone*** in South Africa who stands up against imperialism, black oppression, austerity and attacks on the working class. Every one of us, regardless of our other political differences, has a vital and direct interest in mounting a concerted struggle to overturn this ruling.

The court found Malema guilty on five gun-related charges in a case instigated by AfriForum ***seven years ago*** after he allegedly fired a rifle into the air during the EFF's fifth birthday celebration. Only fools will believe that this ruling, which carries the possibility of a 15-year sentence, is about "gun safety". The racists of AfriForum have been after Malema's head ever since the EFF's founding, because the party's radical demands like land expropriation without compensation strike a chord with brutally exploited black and coloured farm workers and threaten the parasitic interests of the white baas. What's pushed AfriForum's anti-EFF campaign into overdrive is the backing of the US imperialists, who call the shots. Donald Trump read Ramaphosa and Co the riot act at the Oval Office in May, basically ordering them to lock up Malema as a condition for any easing of the crushing 30% tariffs imposed on South Africa. Any leftists or workers' leaders who remain neutral in this case are, no matter what fancy excuses they give, guilty of wretched capitulation to the US imperialist masters.

The ruling against Malema demonstrates once again that you can't fight imperialism with the butchers of Marikana. Ramaphosa and the ANC tops are hellbent on appeasing Trump and his Fifth Column supporters within the country. This will only worsen the economic and social ruin. Already, the jobs bloodbath, de-industrialisation and privatisation are speeding up week by week. Water and other basic services are totally collapsing under the pressure of imperialist austerity and rampant looting. ***Enough!*** It's urgently necessary to organise collective action to start defending ourselves against this onslaught. The defence of Malema can be a spark and a rallying point to start ***fighting back***.

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NUMSA & All Trade Unions:
Defend Malema to Defend Yourselves!
Jan. 23, East London: Join the Class-Struggle Contingent!
(Mobilising Leaflets reprinted on page 2)

labour donated

Defend Julius Malema...

(Continued from front page)

The EFF has announced that it will appeal the ruling with a top-notch legal team. It is certainly correct to make use of every legal avenue available. But this struggle cannot be won with a strategy of relying on the courts. EFF militants must just remember the campaign against the fuel levy hike earlier this year, which ended in a costly defeat after the party put all its hopes on judicial challenges to stop the attack. The last thing we need is a repeat of that, which can only feed into the climate of helpless paralysis. Instead, left-wing militants in the EFF and other organisations must fight to push forward the defence of Malema with ***class-struggle*** methods. This means tying it to the struggle against imperialist austerity and for the needs of the masses. We must raise the pressure on the leaders of the mass organisations, particularly the trade unions, making a direct appeal to their members' shared interest in joining a united-front struggle against our common enemy. ***An injury to one is an injury to all!***

This approach guided the campaign to defend EFF member and trade-union activist Xolani Khoza, a campaign which ended in a rare victory when the charges were dropped unconditionally two months ago. Just as with AfriForum's campaign against Malema, right-wing reactionaries hoped to silence Xolani's opposition to the pro-imperialist "GNU". But they were forced to back down, following a year-long united-front defence campaign waged by ourselves and EFF Ground Forces along with socialists and black liberation fighters representing dozens of organisations. This is the kind of campaign needed now, on a massive scale. The EFF is calling for protest at Malema's sentencing hearing in East London on 23 January 2026. There's no time to lose. We must start ***now*** with mobilising for this protest and organising for a struggle: ***Hands off Malema! Hands off the EFF!*** ■

Kwi-NUMSA kunye nazo zonke iManyano zabasebenzi:
Khuselani uMalema ukuze uzikhusele!

Ubukhosi baseMelika bukaDonald Trump bukwi-rampage. Ukusuka eVenezuela naseLatin America ukuya eAfrika, asinakukhwela ecingweni: ukuchasa i-US impiriyali kuphela kwendlela yokukhusela ulongamo lwethu lwesizwe, imisebenzi kunye neemeko ezisisiseko zokuphila.

E-Mzantsi Afrika, umgca wokuqala wedabi kukubhukuqa isigwebo sika-Oktobha sokubekwa ityala kwenkokheli ye-EFF uJulius Malema, osesichengeni sokugwetywa iminyaka eli-15 entolongweni. Wonke umntu uyazi ukuba esi sigwebo se-AfriForum asikho malunga noMalema ekutyholwa ukuba wadubula umpu emoyeni kwiminyaka eyi-7 eyadlulayo. Lilinge le-GNU' lokubhenela kuTrump, owafuna intloko ka-Malema kuRamaphosa & Co eWhite House ngoMeyi ophelileyo.

Asinakuyivumela le nto! Nokuba umntu unokucinga ntoni nge-EFF kunye nenkokeli yayo, olu luhlaselo kubo bonke abasebenzi namatshantliziyo enkululeko.I-EFF mayingemi yodwa kumzabalazo wokhuseleko luka Malema. Imanyano zabasebenzi kunye nabo bonke abasebenzi banendima ekhethekileyo kulo mzabalazo. Ukukhusela uMalema linyathelo lokuqala lokuma ngokuchasene nemfazwe yerhafu ye-impiriyali kaTrump, esongela ubomi babasebenzi kwiimoto, ezolimo kunye namanye amashishini amaninzi.

Konke nge-23 kaJanuwari! Joyina iqela lomzabalazo wodidi kuqhanqalazo lweEFF eMonti. ***Khusela uMalema! Ukwenzakala komnye wethu kukwenzakalisa kwethu sonke!***

YIBA KHONA!
East London Magistrate's Court
9:00 a.m., Lwesihlanu, 23 January

SOPA Socialist Party of Azania 079 092 9898

Solidarity Action Committee Collective 073 009 5754 or 076 717 5788

Spartacist/South Africa AMABOLSHEVIKI AMNYAMA 079 171 5793

zabalaza4socialism.org.za

NUMSA & All Trade Unions:
Defend Malema to Defend Yourselves!

Donald Trump's American Empire is on the rampage. From Venezuela and Latin America to Africa, we have no choice: resistance to US imperialism is the only way to defend our national sovereignty, jobs and basic living conditions.

In SA, the first battle line is to overturn the October "guilty" verdict against EFF leader Julius Malema, which carries a possible 15-year prison sentence. Everyone knows that this pro-AfriForum ruling is not about Malema allegedly firing a gun into the air 7 years ago. It is the GNU's attempt to appease Trump, who demanded Malema's head from Ramaphosa & Co in the White House last May.

We cannot allow this! Whatever one may think of the EFF and its leader, this is an attack on every worker, leftist and liberation fighter. The EFF must not stand alone in fighting it. Trade unionists and all workers have a special interest in this struggle. Defending Malema is a first step in standing up against Trump's imperialist tariff war, which threatens the livelihoods of workers in auto, agriculture and many other industries.

All out on January 23rd! Join the class-struggle contingent at the EFF protest in East London. ***Hands off Malema! An Injury to One is an Injury to All!***

BE THERE!
East London Magistrate's Court
9:00 a.m., Friday, 23 January 2026

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The closing date for news in this supplement is 21 January.

Open Letter to Abahlali baseMjondolo, AMCU, NUMSA and SAFTU

Why *ALL* Socialists and Trade Unions Have a Stake in Defending Julius Malema

This letter was originally published on 11 December 2025, when it was sent to the organisations it's addressed to. The signatories are listed at the end of the letter, on page 4.

Dear comrades,

Your organisations, along with all working people and oppressed black masses in South Africa, are facing a massive onslaught: brutal evictions, mass retrenchments, plant closures, destruction and privatisation of basic services – the list goes on and on, and the attacks get worse every week. We clearly can't place any hopes in the capitalist rulers or their GNU lackeys to defend the South African economy against the catastrophe that Donald Trump's trade war promises to unleash. Their "answer" to Trump's tariffs is to make workers and the poor pay the consequences, exploiting the crisis to cripple the trade unions and attack the black masses. And while there have recently been a few favourable court verdicts pausing some companies' retrenchment processes, these are nothing more than a speedbump slowing the relentless attacks.

The only reliable path to resist this onslaught is through uniting workers, unemployed and landless people for collective struggle to defend all our interests against our common enemies, the imperialists and white monopoly capitalists. We must have no illusions that this will be an easy task. The socialist and trade-union movements are weaker and more divided than they have been in decades. With the weight of mass unemployment and poverty bearing down harder than ever, the feeling of helplessness is widespread. This makes it easier for the ruling class to pit the oppressed against each other, picking off one sector at a time. Your organisations can help turn this situation around by fighting to overcome the divisions and mistrust that have paralysed resistance up til now. We welcome SAFTU's declaration that your federation is "committed to breaking down divisions, overcoming the pettiness that has weakened our struggles, and forging unity of the exploited and dispossessed in action" ("SAFTU in solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo on the occasion of their 20th anniversary", 2 October).

We believe that a crucial part of this is building united-front defence of the left and workers movement against state repression. As the famous slogan says, "***An injury to one is an injury to all!***" We all know the important role this principle played in building the power of the black trade-union movement in the 1970s and 80s, making it the backbone of the anti-apartheid struggle. By building solidarity not on the basis of moral appeals but on our shared material interest, it was pivotal for combating the harmful effects of sectarian divisions and poisonous apartheid divide-and-rule. Think of the campaign to free Moses Mayekiso. This and countless other efforts mounted to defend trade-unionists and liberation fighters were key for unifying and fortifying the struggle.

But even though this slogan is often repeated, it has become more and more emptied of content even as the left suffers one defeat after another. The

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We Need *UNITY* to Defend Ourselves Against US Imperialism!

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Open Letter...

(Continued from page 3)

clearest example today is the deafening silence of most socialists and trade unions in response to the judicial vendetta targeting Julius Malema and the EFF. Obviously, Malema is not a worker. And we are well aware that each of your organisations has its own criticisms, political differences and in some cases past organisational conflicts with the EFF. But to take that as justification for leaving the EFF to face this attack alone is the worst sectarianism, and will only worsen the current paralysis.

We all saw what happened in May when the GNU delegation met with Trump in the Oval Office. The commander-in-chief of US imperialism effectively put a gun to Malema's head, and ordered Ramaphosa-Steenhuisen to pull the trigger. And the heads of the GNU responded by appeasing their master. What else explains the fact that years-old cases laid by AfriForum suddenly get brought to trial and rubber-stamped with "guilty" verdicts? Only dupes and apologists for the GNU will believe it's a miraculous coincidence that this happened just a few short months after Trump demanded Malema's head. And only dupes will tell workers that the critical issue in his case is whether Malema allegedly fired a rifle into the air at an EFF celebration ***seven years ago***. Even if he did it, this was a purely symbolic act that ***harmed nobody***, and it's certainly no crime from the standpoint of the working class and oppressed. The real crime is that he's threatened with a single day in prison, and possibly a 15-year sentence! The liberation movement has a long history of celebrating our heroes with gun salutes. If we allow Malema to be prosecuted for this it means bowing before the oppressor.

We urge all socialists and trade unionists to reject this ruling and fight to have it overturned. Regardless of what other issues divide us, ***all*** of our struggles will be set back if we stand aside while Trump and AfriForum take out the EFF's leadership. Every struggle for land and housing will be weakened if the EFF can be targeted for being a prominent voice calling for land expropriation without compensation. Every fight against retrenchments and plant closures will be crippled if Malema can be silenced as an advocate of nationalisation of the mines and industry. For all these reasons, we urge your organisations to speak out: ***Hands off Julius Malema! Hands off the EFF!***

Some leftists object that standing up in defence of Malema would be divisive, alienating workers who mistrust the EFF or support other political parties. Nothing could be further from the truth! By standing with the EFF against this attack, you will also be building the unity and fighting strength needed to beat back the attacks on your own members. If NUMSA, FAWU and other SAFTU unions fight Trump's repression of the EFF, then workers at ArcelorMittal, Ford, Daybreak Foods and countless other companies will be in a better position to defend themselves against the effects of Trump's tariffs. It will be easier for them to rally the unemployed, community members, unorganised workers and members of other trade unions to support their struggles against retrenchments, because their unions are showing that they are serious about fighting shoulder to shoulder against our common enemy.

In fact, what's divisive is to not stand up against US imperialism. We already see how xenophobic outfits like Dudula and March In March are growing as a result of the paralysis, scapegoating immigrants as a reactionary answer to the misery caused by imperialist austerity. Fighting together with the EFF in a united front against Trump's attacks is a way to undercut the base of these reactionaries.

United-front defence of the EFF does not in any way mean giving up one's own political independence and identity. All of your organisations, as well as workers loyal to other parties or no political party at all, must be allowed and encouraged to march under the political banner they choose. Doing so gives us a stronger and more solid base for common action against our shared enemy. ***March separately, but strike together!*** That is the meaning of the united front. We appeal to you to seize this initiative for unity to defend ourselves. This will be an important step to strengthen not just your organisations but the whole working class.

Comradely,

Azanian Section of the Fourth International

Socialist Party of Azania

Committee to Defend Xolani Khoza

Solidarity Action Committee Collective

Spartacist/South Africa AMABOLSHEVIKI AMNYAMA

Individual Signatories:
Paul Ntsumele, GIWUSA* member, Mbombela
Vumile Fongo, founder of Nompucuko NPO*, Queenstown
Xolani Khoza, EFF* activist and trade-unionist, Mbombela
Xolani Nkwenkwezi, NUMSA* Shop Steward, Gqeberha

*organisation listed for identification purposes only

¡POR LA EMANCIPACIÓN OBRERA Y NACIONAL!
EL ANTIIMPERIALISTA

Venezuela Attacked, Mexico Next

Unions: Defend the Country!

The following is translated from a 9 January supplement to El Antiimperialista*, newspaper of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.*

Like a 19th century robber baron at the head of a colonial empire, Donald Trump declared that Venezuelan oil belongs to the U.S. and used military force to go get it. U.S. imperialism bombed Caracas and other cities and killed at least 80 people, including Cuban soldiers and Venezuelan civilians, on its way to kidnapping the president, Nicolás Maduro, along with Cilia Flores. Trump proceeded to say he likes the idea of a similar action against Petro in Colombia and that he looks forward to the Cuban government falling. Threatening comments against Mexico have increased to the point that last night Trump announced "hitting land" to go against the cartels. The attack on Venezuela is really the beginning of a chapter of renewed aggression in which Mexico will be on the front line. The imperialists are emboldened and want to make it brutally clear that Latin America is their backyard. If they aren't stopped now, the future of the continent's working masses will be dire. There's no time to lose! ***We must protest, mobilize and strike in defense of Venezuela, Mexico and all of Latin America!***

Sheinbaum's comments all week about there not being a risk to Mexico are suicidal illusions. Since Trump has returned to office, he has done nothing but bully and attack the world, including the U.S.'s main semi-colony, Mexico. Our country has already suffered the consequences of USMCA, of the tariffs and of the trade war with China. Mexico is Cuba's main oil supplier, a situation which is accentuated by Venezuelan exports being diverted. That is something the U.S. will want to stop. Sheinbaum has fewer and fewer options in her attempt to balance between the powerful Mexican proletariat and U.S. imperialism, which wants to proceed with its objective of turning the country into an open colony.

So, what can we do in Mexico to protect ourselves and all the other countries that are threatened? Mexico is the leading exporter to the United States, including crucially needed material for manufacturing, like electronic components, auto parts and steel. Furthermore, there are huge U.S. investments in Mexico that depend on Mexican labor and social stability to continue extracting profits and resources. A truly anti-imperialist government would counter American threats with measures that go against U.S. interests in Mexico, such as halting supply chains in key industries or confiscating imperialist assets if threats and provocations continue. Such a government would also act against the imperialist financial stranglehold on the country. ***Cancel the debt! Nationalize the banks!*** It would also seek to undermine dependence on the U.S. ***For a Latin American economic/military agreement with China!*** Other basic defensive measures would include kicking the DEA, the CIA and other imperialist agencies out of Mexico, as well as banning U.S. military aircraft and drones from flying over Mexican territory.

Sheinbaum remains a very popular president, not least because she constantly speaks about national sovereignty, which is a subject dear to people's hearts. That Sheinbaum condemned the attack on Venezuela and the kidnapping of Maduro is popular among the population, where anti-Yankee sentiment is deep-rooted. Nonetheless, her perspective is based on the UN Charter and international law. It should be clear after more than two years of genocide in Gaza that the U.N. and international law, despite occasional empty words of support, do not stop massacres or defend the oppressed. In case there was any doubt that Trump does whatever he wants, yesterday he declared: "I don't need international law." If there is any hope for getting the U.S. to back off, it is by applying real pressure at points where they will feel the pain.

The unions must demand that the government organize the defense of Mexico through genuine anti-imperialist actions. We must propose joint resistance with Venezuela and Cuba against the U.S.! We must demand arms and military training for the people under the control of the unions and peasant organizations! The resources for all this and to provide relief to the population in the face of the imminent crisis must come from the wealth that is now being plundered from the country by the imperialists. ***Expropriate the energy sector without compensation! Revoke mining concessions to imperialist companies!***

This is not what Sheinbaum has sought to do, because she is not willing to actually break with U.S. imperialism. While she often repeats "cooperation, not subordination," the U.S. is no longer interested in "cooperation" and demands "subordination." The Mexican government's conceding to Trump's demands will only lead to further subjugation of the country. It is not that Sheinbaum doesn't understand the situation; it's that she's in a bind. In order to put fear in the hearts of the imperialist, she would need to mobilize the masses of Mexico. But workers rising up against imperialism and their conditions of subjugation and exploitation might logically turn next to the weaker national bourgeoisie, which also exploits and oppresses them.

It is important that so many unions, leftists and social organizations are protesting the attack on Venezuela. This energy should not be limited to declarations or symbolic acts, which are not enough to defend Venezuela or Mexico. We must fight for a true mobilization of the power of labor as the only real way to stop the imperialists. It is essential that these efforts also draw in other key sectors—like auto, airports, oil and mining—where working conditions have been severely degraded under the pressure of the imperialists.

It is also essential to extend a hand to workers and the oppressed in the U.S., where there is currently discontent due to the worsening economy and anger at deadly police and ICE brutality. Those masses face the same enemy as us in the multinational corporations that operate on both sides of the border and, in particular, the imperialist government of the U.S. It is necessary to unite the oppressed of the entire continent—from Canada to Chile and Argentina—against the main enemy. ***For an anti-imperialist united front!*** ■

Strategy to Win...

(Continued from back page)

won't be bullied, the White House cannot dictate our domestic and foreign policies." The next they do a U-turn, offering concessions (e.g. Malema's head on a platter) in the deluded hope that Trump will ease his pressure if they give in to some of his diktats. It's an incoherent mess that only manages to piss off everyone.

To make sense of their confusing balancing act, we must start from the role that Ramaphosa and the ANC tops play in the neo-apartheid order. It's not just that they are corrupt and spineless (they are). Above all, they are representatives of the black elites, who are simultaneously crushed by the white monopoly capitalists and utterly beholden to them. The white capitalists, in turn, are a Fifth Column for US imperialism—a bit more "refined" than Trump's open fans like AfriForum, but no less committed to keeping the country under the American boot. Trump's pressure is putting the squeeze on both sections of the South African elites, making the tension between them sharper and the government's gyrations more frantic.

The EFF leaders do of course denounce the ANC's spinelessness—at times quite powerfully, like when Ramaphosa and Co crawled for Trump in the White House last May. However, if we take a step back and look at things objectively, the overall picture is a balancing act similar to the ANC's but further to the left. On the one hand, they give voice to the deep anger of the black masses who wish for a resolute stand against Trump. At the same time, the EFF's nationalist strategy is centred on trying to win the allegiance of disgruntled sections of the black elites and show them that the EFF can do a better job of defending their narrow interests. So whenever the government shifts its balance onto that foot—around the G20 summit in December, or immediately after Maduro's kidnapping—the EFF leadership falls into line behind Ramaphosa, pandering to the illusion that he will stand firm against Trump.

Since the 2024 elections, Ramaphosa and the GNU have drawn a consistent line against the EFF, a line which only gets sharper the more Trump bears down. Instead of a clear response, the EFF has answered with slogans and activity that pull in opposite directions. Radical slogans like "Year of the Pickets" and "class struggle against imperialism", which speak to Ground Forces who want a militant struggle to defend their party, have remained empty words with no serious mobilisation to back them up. In contrast, the real activity has been centred on showing up the EFF as a "responsible", purely parliamentary party and coalition-partner-in-waiting for the ANC. The end result of all these mixed signals is to confuse EFF members and reinforce the paralysis of the masses, undercutting the party's own defence and the struggle against American imperialism.

This must be fought! For EFF militants and others who want to break the paralysis, the task is to work together to forge an ***anti-imperialist front to defend ourselves against Trump and the GNU***. The only way to get Trump to back off is by making the US imperialists feel the pain. Although militarily and economically South Africa is relatively weak, we are a major supplier of platinum group metals and other critical minerals which along with rare earths constitute a key pressure point for the American empire. To maximise the impact and forge unity against US imperialism, we must fight:

- Shut down delivery of SA coal to Israel!
- No collaboration with imperialism! US bases out of Africa!
- China: Stop the supply of rare earths to the American empire! For African-Chinese economic/military cooperation based on unity against US imperialism!

Fighting for any of these things means crossing the red lines of the Randlords. That is something Ramaphosa and Co will do everything they can to stop. ***You can't fight Trump with the butchers of Marikana.***

How to Win the Workers?

The key to turning defence of Malema into a rallying point for a unified resistance to US imperialism is fusing it with the struggle to defend the masses against the enemy within—the Randlords and their GNU lackeys. Every success in defending the working class against the GNU will help strengthen and unify the forces of resistance to US aggression. And workers have a direct interest in Malema's defence: standing up to Trump will put them in a better position to defend themselves.

The working class has its back against the wall right now. Strike activity is at a low point and the trade-union movement is weak and fractured. There is a widespread feeling of helplessness in the face of the combined onslaught of Trump's tariffs and GNU neoliberal austerity. On top of fear of falling victim to the jobs bloodbath, workers are bitter and demoralised from decades of betrayal by corrupt and spineless trade-union bureaucrats who have sapped the unions' power by using them as stepping stones to personal enrichment in ANC/government and corporate posts.

What should revolutionaries do in this tough situation? Many militants look at this mess and conclude that we must build new alternatives, particularly to COSATU unions. Although motivated by a just hatred of the leaders' crimes, this means turning your back on the base of these unions—the majority of organised workers in many industries and regions—and leaving them to the treacherous tops. This is no way to win the confidence of the more class-conscious workers, who know in their gut that even with a rotten leadership their union is still a bulwark against the racist bosses.

Instead of abandoning the existing unions—which also worsens the organisational divisions undermining workers' power—the task is to work within them to build a consistent opposition. We must fight to defeat the union bureaucracy from within and transform the unions into revolutionary mass organisations of the proletariat. (Needless to say, this has ***nothing*** in common with reversing the split of NUMSA and other unions from the Tripartite Alliance, as is now proposed by Irvin Jim.)

SPARTACIST

China: Defend Venezuela! Resist America!

This article was originally published as a 9 January supplement to Spartacist.

Trump's naked imperialist aggression in Venezuela is a staggering blow, not only to the masses of Latin America and the Global South but to the People's Republic of China as well. The U.S. pirates are seizing oil supplies mainly bound for China and demanding the ouster of Chinese, Russian, Cuban and Iranian advisers from Venezuela. And what is the response of the Communist Party of China (CPC)? Nothing but speeches about "international law" and pledges to maintain their economic ties, just like they did nothing to stop the Gaza genocide.

The more the CPC acts like a paper tiger, the more this encourages the depredations of the U.S. as it tries to prop up its crumbling hegemony. Toppling Maduro was a stepping stone for its plans to sink the Cuban Revolution and force Iran and other recalcitrant regimes into submission. All this is to prepare the ground for confronting the People's Republic head-on.

The empty words from the BRICS+ chastising Trump show once again their prostration before the U.S. What's needed instead is a united anti-imperialist front based on the world's workers and oppressed peoples. The Chinese people did not secure their liberation through United Nations resolutions or "win-win" negotiations but through bitter struggle against imperialism. China has the power to lead such a fight now. But its leaders resist this course because they embrace all the bankrupt institutions of the dying liberal world order. It's high time to change course!

- China used its economic muscle to push back against Trump's tariffs. Today, if it stops rare earths from reaching U.S. shores, it could force Trump to release Maduro and make him think twice before his next rampage.
- China sits on trillions in foreign reserves. It should send a good chunk to Cuba, along with engineers to help rebuild its infrastructure.
- China has built up massive military power to defend the mainland against Japanese and U.S. aggression. Good! Now use it to resist the imperialists in the Caribbean and the Persian Gulf! This would not be an "imperialist" move but a way to protect the world from the real imperialists.

There is a lot of silly talk in China that the humiliation of Maduro shows how the PLA could swoop into Taiwan and seize President Lai Ching-te. This bombast is just a way to save face after China's utter capitulation. In fact, the quick U.S. victory in Venezuela will strengthen U.S. encirclement of China, not least over Taiwan.

The best way to defend the People's Republic is for China to lead an anti-imperialist struggle that could win the hearts and minds of billions in the Global South and encourage workers in the U.S. and Japan to fight back against the imperialists at home. Key to this strategy is the Chinese proletariat. With its central role in global production, mobilizing this force could choke off the imperialists' profits and change the whole reactionary dynamic they're imposing on the world. ***CPC: Stop kowtowing! Fight imperialism!*** ■

The fight to rebuild the trade-union movement must be waged hand-in-hand with revitalising the liberation struggle based on class-struggle leadership. Both movements have been systematically disorganised and hollowed out by decades of subordination to nationalist elites who rammed through austerity and anti-labour attacks dictated by white monopoly capital.

The task of the day is to organise and unify the ***defensive*** struggles, exposing how the trade-union bureaucracy's reformist strategy worsens the losses and divisions. Their criminal silence on Malema's case goes hand in hand with refusal to mount any serious defence of their members against Trump and the GNU. Against this, we must fight to tie the two struggles together, showing how this is in the vital interest of the trade unions and intensifying the pressure on the unions to mobilise. ***Fight the jobs bloodbath! Nationalise without compensation foreign-owned factories, mines and farms that retrench workers!***

The EFF's radical demands like nationalisation of the mines and banks are popular among workers, and a lot of them can see that Malema's persecution is bad news. But the parliamentarist-nationalist strategy of the leadership undercuts this appeal. If the EFF leaders are just waiting for the opportunity to enter an ANC-led coalition government—which would mean betraying the EFF's Cardinal Pillars—then workers can have no confidence that they will lead a serious fight for their jobs and livelihoods. For this reason, too, building a class-struggle pole of opposition is vital for the defence of Malema and the EFF.

Just as we can't expect Trump to back off, it is hopelessly naïve to think that the persecution of Malema will fizzle out or drag on for years in the courts. The vendetta against Malema is not going away, and neither is US imperialism. We must brace ourselves for more shocks ahead.

Trade unions: Defend Malema to defend yourselves!
For class struggle against the jobs bloodbath!
For an anti-imperialist front to defend ourselves against Trump & the GNU!
Break with the butchers of Marikana! ■

AMABOLSHEVIKI AMNYAMA

Defend Malema, Defend South Africa Against Trump!

What *Strategy* Do We Need to Win?

January 3rd showed the new world reality we live in. With his bombing of Venezuela and brazen abduction of Maduro and Flores, Trump sent a message loud and clear about what he intends to do with countries that refuse American diktats. Appeals to international law and the "rules-based order", friendly ties with China: none of it is any deterrent if you can't defend yourself.

This should be a wake-up call for South Africa, which has been high on Trump's hit list since his return to the Oval Office. We must have no illusions: Trump ***will*** continue to press his relentless campaign of tariffs, sanctions and other attacks on the country. As one of the weaker BRICS+ member states, South Africa is seen as a soft target. By forcing a capitulation here, the US imperialists hope to isolate and indirectly weaken China–their main strategic target. (The 2025 round of tariff wars showed that as things stand, China is still too powerful for them to confront directly.)

In the face of this unmistakable threat, we hear more and more calls from leftists for some kind of anti-imperialist front. This is an important shift, reflecting at least a basic recognition that the left and trade unions are very weak and divided, and that unity is needed to defend ourselves against US imperialism. That's a necessary starting point, but from there we must still take the first steps of ***building*** an anti-imperialist movement that wins the support of the masses and guides them in an effective struggle. Here, two main obstacles still hold back most of the left.

The first obstacle is clear when we look at those who refuse to defend EFF leader Julius Malema against the legal vendetta ordered by Trump. Whether out of sectarianism, workerism or subordination to the ANC, these leftists flee from the first major battle line to defend South Africa against US imperialism, weakening the working class and ceding the anti-imperialist struggle to the nationalists. (The Open Letter, "Why ALL Socialists and Trade Unions Have a Stake in Defending Julius Malema", page 3, is directed at combating this obstacle on the left.)

On the other hand, there are many on the left who see that whatever our political differences, we must not let them stand in the way of forming a united front to defend Malema. This is a good thing, and we seek to work together with these leftists to strengthen and broaden this united front, making it into a rallying point to fight US imperialism. But to do this we need to be honest about where we are at, including the political obstacles that also hold back this section of the left.

In terms of promoting an anti-capitulationist line, the EFF is the overwhelmingly dominant pole on the left (it's no accident they are in Trump's crosshairs). However, it must be recognised that their struggle against imperialism is based on a ***parliamentarist-nationalist*** strategy. Their main emphasis is on the courts, parliamentary committees and commissions of enquiry. When they do seek to mobilise the masses—and they do—it is in a way that politically subordinates the working class to a middle-class leadership that channels struggle along lines acceptable to the black elites. As we discuss below, this strategy holds us back from building an effective defence against Trump and reinforces paralysis in the face of his attacks.

Against this, the task of revolutionaries is to fight to push the movement forward along ***class-struggle*** lines—ones that unite the toilers and oppressed against US imperialism, combining defence of national sovereignty with defending the masses and attacking the interests of the ruling class. Through this struggle, we must build a Bolshevik pole that competes for leadership. The main lesson from the anti-apartheid struggle is that when communists cede leadership of the national-democratic struggle to petty-bourgeois nationalists, no matter how radical, it inevitably leads to conciliation of imperialism.

To be sure, the forces of the Bolshevik pole are quite weak and disorganised today. To begin addressing this, let's look at two key questions facing the movement today and why a class-struggle strategy is needed to answer them.

Will Ramaphosa Stand Up to Trump?

Keeping up with the Ramaphosa government's response to Trump is dizzying. One week they denounce US aggression, declaring, "South Africa

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